



Media Release

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Aboriginal led solutions the key to closing the health gap

Today's Closing the Gap Report demonstrates the need to more than double the network and reach of Aboriginal controlled medical services to Close the Gap in health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

National Aboriginal and Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO), CEO, Pat Turner, said despite some improvement in education outcomes, only one out of seven Closing the Gap targets is on track.

The 9th Closing the Gap Report shows there have been small improvements over time in some areas of health but we are not on track to Close the Gap in average life expectancy and the gap in deaths from cancer is widening.

"The Prime Minister committed to working with our people this morning and from this date on we expect nothing less," Ms Turner said.

"For NACCHO the acceptance that our Aboriginal controlled health services deliver the best model of integrated primary health care in Australia is a clear demonstration that every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person should have ready access to these services, no matter where they live. We can more than double the current 140 Aboriginal medical services that will improve health outcomes.

"Governments at all levels need to make a massive long term investment to redress the social and cultural determinants of health, which are responsible for more than 30 per cent of ill health in our communities.

"Early childhood education delivered in a culturally respectful manner by our own people, trained to work locally in their communities must be a priority."

Ms Turner said current Commonwealth Government policies remain disconnected and siloed.

"In 2017 we need to see greater connectivity across all government portfolios at the Ministerial and departmental levels and more accountability from state and territory governments for the funding they receive to improve the lives of Aboriginal people.

"In every jurisdiction we see inconsistent data collection. In 2017, with such innovative information technology available, all governments should implement open, transparent, consistent data collection and reporting to ensure their accountability to the Australian people at large.

"NACCHO stands ready, willing and able to work with everyone to negotiate better solutions to public policy and program investments that affect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people"

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